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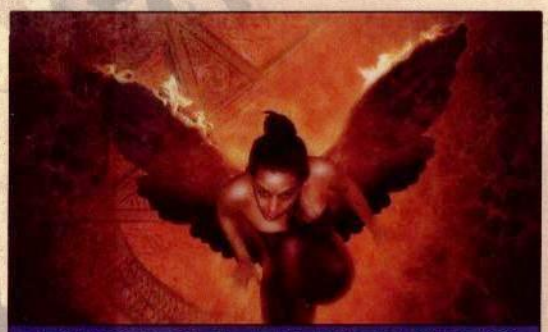

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Super heroes...

The boom seems never ending...and we like it that way! Spider Man, The Hulk, The X-Men, the Fantastic Four and Batman are back to the movie screen in best Hollywood form - and with great success. But that is not enough: This year, the super hero par excellence returns: Superman will entertain us in a new version! Warner Bros. will delight us with the hero of steel this June. Representatives of the games and cartoon industry probably already rub their hands in the view of a huge growth in turnover. Which would be much to the liking of illustrators who are working for this industry. While advertising agencies were their most important customers in the past, today they mainly work for publishing houses and games manufacturers whose products are put into the limelight as attractively as possible with markers and airbrush. Not so long ago, many graphic artists and designers worried about their future because more and more agencies relied on photographs and retouched photographs. With the triumphant success in the fields of fantasy and science fiction another door has opened with enough room for all kinds of techniques, from conventional to digital creation. Arthur Suydam also committed himself to this profession. The American is one of the most demanded fantasy illustrators in the US. Several books as well as innumerable cover and magazine illustrations bear his trademark. No wonder he is booked solid! Mind you - he uses traditional techniques. Frank Fiedler does not. The German ARNO Art Award winner works 100 percent digital. The graphic tablet, a powerful computer and some graphic software are his working materials. In a detailed workshop, Fiedler shows our readers the creation of one of his works of art and gives useful hints for your own compositions. Without any doubt, custom painting is also booming at the moment. Always more elaborate and individual motorcycles demand the respective paint job and so airbrushers may rejoice in a growing market. For Markus Mayer, whose development had rather been towards illustration and sculpture in the last few years, this development was reason enough to dust off his old airbrush equipment and do some exciting varnish work. In "The Skulls" he renders homage to the present trend for realistic flames and skulls and shows our readers step by step how he realized such a paintjob. The ARNO Art Award 2006 has begun. Once again, we are looking for the best illustrators and works of art in cooperation with representatives from the industry and once more there are many great prizes and advertising campaigns to be won. There is more information about how to participate in this issue and on our web site at www.art-scene-international.com.

We hope you will have loads of fun with this present issue!

ART SCENE INTERNATIONAL

Your ART SCENE INTERNATIONAL team

AD INFINITUM: *"Trabalho produzido para o capítulo 'Requiem' do depthCORE Collective. Esta é minha visão da vida e da morte, realizada no Poser e no Photoshop"*

no angels

by Oliver Wetter

1

No, the idea for this work of art does not have any religious background although it sounds that way. It is an experimental work of art, which represents my occupation with symbols and their meaning. As we know, surrealists like Dalí, Magritte, Bosch or Escher often hid messages, visions and dreams in their artwork, which they depicted through certain symbols.

The original title: "When angels are no longer desired" describes in this artwork the situation of a well meaning friend in need who tries to show somebody the right door in life but gets nothing but ingratitude in return for his efforts. The helper appears as a human being (mask), the good will inside him (represented by the wings) would like to show the way (the light), although it is guided by some higher power (the marionette limbs and the lines) and seems to be a stranger (strange form of the head).

As far as the implementation is concerned, many small and often very time-consuming steps are needed which require much experience with the respective software applications. Drawing and creative skills are undoubtedly the prerequisites without which such a work of art cannot be developed, no matter in which technique.

What does the proverb say? "All roads lead to Rome", and so the techniques described here represent my working method which I combined especially for this workshops to seize the opportunity to give many small hints in the margin. Of course, working solely on a computer is one possibility. However, the challenge for me is to take an artwork out of the computer, split it into its components in order to combine them anew, refine them with traditional painting methods and then scan it again to make it apt for reproduction, much larger.

This step by step is supposed to induce you to develop your own ideas and give you hints how to implement them. As an artist, you are also a researcher to a certain extent and particularly in the fields of digital and mixed media there is lots of pioneering work to be done until this kind of art is established and accepted.

As a basic requirement, I hypothesize that you are acquainted with the functions of a computer and have some basic knowledge in Photoshop. I will explain some commands more thoroughly during the workshop; however, it is always better to try things out yourself. The term "rendering" should be known, it means the computer-controlled calculation of a 3D model.

The equipment:
PC or Mac with at least 800 MHz
1 GB RAM and enough hard disk space
Photo printer at least A4
A4 scanner with 600 dpi minimum
Wacom tablet, at least A6 large
Photoshop 7.0 or newer
Poser 3

Watercolor, Ovalit-T fibre glue, airbrush paint (e.g. Createx), black acrylic paint in a tube, ready covered and pre-primed canvas, fixative and clear coat and of course bristle brush and airbrush.

Fig. 1
I do a sketch to get an overview of the photo references that I need. The doors in the background (synonyms for the opportunities in life) are supposed to add some depth and three-dimensionality to the composition.

As I cannot always take all the photographs myself I also take to some stock photos, which are available for free on the internet (e.g. www.deviantart.com or www.sxc.hu).

Fig. 2
We start with Poser 3 (in the meantime, version 6.0 is available, but the old and already available

2

version is all I require for my purpose). As I do not like to rely on the rendering capacities of this semi professional software and it takes too long to familiarize myself with more professional ones I quickly texturize the characters in Photoshop.

Afterwards, all I have to do in poser is the right adjustment of

the character, the illumination, the perspective, the camera angle and the colors of the background.

To describe all this would be overkill, but Poser is probably the simplest 3D software available and almost self-explaining.

The artwork was displayed in 300 dpi resolution at 2000 x 2000 pixels and saved as a .tiff file. In the rendering settings you may also determine the colors of the skin and the environment (however, as Poser's renderer is not very good, you will have to work it over in Photoshop). When positioning a figure, polygons overlap every now and then. Unfortunately, this problem has not been mended until version 5.0. For those who would like to apply beautiful and maybe experimental textures I recommend to save the file as .3ds or Lightwave object and to buy some better 3D software (3D Studio Max or Cinema 4D).

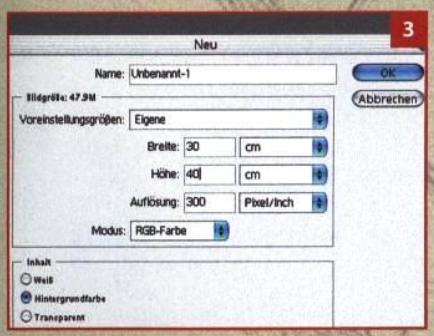

Fig. 3
I have restricted myself to a size of 30 x 40 cm. Thus, the artwork is a printable file (and it also looks quite good as a work of art in a shadow gap frame). Moreover, with only two parts it may rather easily be scanned again afterwards.

In "file -> new" I create a new picture in Photoshop (Fig. 3). Take care to determine the measurements in centimeters and the resolution in 300 dpi - pixel/inch...not pixel/cm! Dpi are dots per inch and setting pixel/inch is nearest to this unit in print while at pixel/cm (1 cm = 2,54 inches) much more pixels or points are on one cm than would be there in the inch setting!

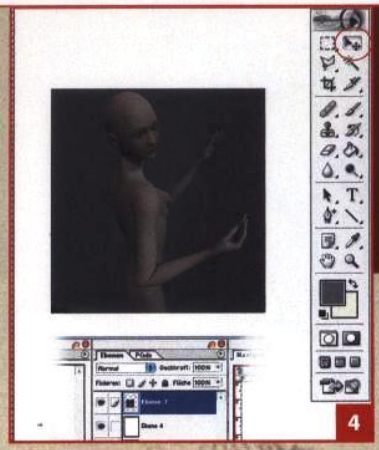

Fig. 4
Now I open the result of Poser's rendering in Photoshop. With the arrow symbol it is easy to drag & drop an already open picture into a newly created one. The software automatically creates a new layer for the newly inserted image.

As the newly inserted figure looks quite small on the large sheet of paper and I have to work it over anyway, I "interpolate" the size with the following function: With -> edit -> free transform I have deformed the inserted image somewhat and magnified it to the size of the whole picture (see Fig.5).

Please note:
As this is a reference, nothing gets lost in enlarging!

Hint:
Two alternatives for those who do not want to switch to miniature view every time they open their work in Photoshop:

1)
Unfortunately, the integrated browser (standard since PS 7.0) is a little slow when opening files which contain many images with more than 500 mb. To make up for that, it even displays EXIF data of photographs.
2)
The simpler method: with the Mac Finder or the PC Explorer (switch to miniature view) and simply drag and drop the image you need into Photoshop.

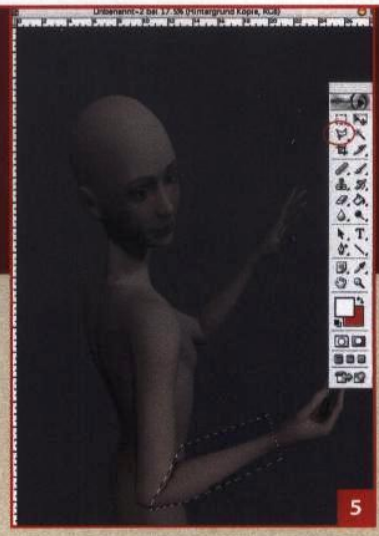

Fig. 5
As you can see on the arm, the rendering results are not very good and enlarging the figure of course also blew up these mistakes. Therefore, it needs to be worked over.

As the figure is cut into pieces anyway to give it a marionette's appearance, I cut certain areas like arm and hands with the polygon lasso and insert them again which turns the single limbs into relocatable elements on separate layers.

While cutting, I may strike out somewhat and I do not need to meticulously follow the contours because the newly inserted layer may be freed from the background parts with one click of the magic wand (beside the lasso tool).

The great advantage of setting the poser rendering tool to "monochrome background": this regular background may be easily removed in Photoshop.

Fig. 6
With the clone stamp I add the shadows in the original layer now (and smoothen some polygon mistakes at the same time like e.g. at the throat, the indented shadows and the arms).

The advantage of the copy or clone stamp is that you take up a pattern or a picture information to insert it at a chosen place in exactly the same size as determined before. The grade of transparency/

opacity may also be adjusted. Later on I will use this tool to free the scanned artwork from impurities.

As you can see at the fingers I have made some changes to the figure in the "liquifier". The filter "liquify" is new to Photoshop 7 and was available as a plug-in by Kai's Powertools before. With this filter, images may be distorted, swirled and even partially mirrored. It may be a very handy tool when it is used the right way (also for caricatures).

Fig. 7
As a next step I do the light bulb, which I cut with the "magnetic lasso". The lasso automatically adapts to the outlines in contours with much contrast. The polygon lasso is hidden as a second symbol under the lasso - just press a little longer!

As I mentioned before I switch to the "drag & drop arrow" then and use it to simply drag the selected light bulb into my picture. There I turn it into the right position with the command "edit -> transform -> rotate 180°" (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8
Unfortunately, I cannot take the circle of light around the bulb with the polygon lasso. Therefore, I use a simple trick: I copy the white area once more with the magnetic lasso and insert it as a "new layer". With the filter "Gaussian Blur" within the filter selection "blur" I may then control the "glow" effect step by step. As this filter has a real time preview, you may estimate the result very well while setting it.

Fig. 9
After one hour and a half, it is time to think everything over once more. If something is wrong at that stage or if I cannot find a suitable reference, I may discard everything and start anew... Luckily, this did not happen here.

With a pattern for the golden section/golden spiral, which I place over the artwork as a new layer, I may now control whether the arrangement of the composing also comes up to the mathematic and aesthetic composition

rules. After some minor changes I may start working. Finally. I start with some texture for the skin. It ought to appear slightly coarse, as if it had been treated with desert sand, something extraordinary for the face that includes expression and dignity.

Fig. 10
Thanks to the Poser rendering settings for the single colored background it was quite simple to knock out the figure. Now I drag the texture into the picture and enlarge it with "edit -> free transform" until the figure is covered. Then I drag the texture layer behind the figure and return to the figure layer (which is still connected to the background at that moment). With the magic wand I then choose the gray background and from the menu "select -> inverse" the figure which I cut and integrate into the image with "edit -> insert".

Clicking the same layer again with the magic wand selects the outline of the figure once more. Now I switch to the texture layer I had selected before (a simple photograph of a wall) and cut the background so only a silhouette of the figure remains.

After that, this layer is placed on top of the figure and treated with the layer effect "overlay" to obtain the result shown in Fig. 10.

Fig. 11
I have made this edited photograph of a friend some time ago. It is ideal to show the mood of the lighting situation and the desired facial expression.

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I cut the part out with the polygon lasso and insert it mirrored with the command "edit -> transform -> flip horizontal".

Of course, some corrections must be made to make the perspective appear more or less correct. I removed the piercing with the clone stamp and bent the nose slightly into the opposite direction with the liquifier...

For the shadow of the facial mask I have copied the layer, placed it under the other layer and turned down the brightness with the control command "image -> adjustments -> hue/saturation". With the blur (Fig. 11) I created a soft edge afterwards.

Fig.12
At Deviantart.com I found an interesting photograph suitable for the head. I cut it and created a transition at the lower rim with the big eraser.

Things are slowly getting into shape now. Now I start doing the wings (4 wings ought to be enough). I also found the wings at deviantart.com (thanks to http://KaSstock.deviantart.com and http://don-sarcasmo-stock.deviantart.com).

Fig. 13
With the magic wand and "select -> color range" I can cut both pairs of wings neatly and attach them to the back.

The second pair of wings that only appears like a shadow is just a copy of the front pair.

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Meanwhile, I have taken a larger step in the background. As the figure has been completely cut out of the background, I may place it onto any photograph.

The floor texture e.g. consists of a photograph of a wall whose perspective I distorted with "edit -> free transform".

Fig.14
Here I give you a view of the layer inspector, which is quite busy with 28 layers. When you do extensive composings in Photoshop rather often, you stop naming every single one of them for mere lack of time. In the meantime, I can see the position of each layer from their sequence. However, own names make it clearer.

The sky. It consists of two photographs in similar colors, which I found in my photo archive and simply put behind the whole composition to try them. The selected layer 15 (see Fig. 14) has been applied to the background layer (Fig. 14) with 57 % opacity and the layer effect "screen".

The advantage of the layer effects lies in the possibility to cancel them at any time and to apply them to only one layer.

I inserted the floor in a similar way and then adjusted it to the colors of the remaining artwork with "image -> adjustments -> levels". By the way, the floor level has been erased on the edges towards the middle of the artwork with a large eraser at 50 % pressure.

Fig. 15
Sometimes you have to put the picture upside down or, as shown in this example, look at the mirrored version to perhaps improve the perspective.

Until now, the one thing that annoyed my while composing was that there is no "entrance" to the artwork. The character stood with its back towards the entrance and so blocked the way into the picture.

A simple turn may improve the overall situation considerably... just try to do this in conventional paintings...

To give the composing a glowing, almost dreamy touch, I bathe the whole artwork in one color. A shaken archived photograph of an architectural nighttime exposure, which you would delete immediately under normal circumstances, has the necessary glow to bathe the rest of the artwork in ochre hues all over under the layer function "vivid light".

So I have created a completely different lighting situation in a brace of shakes.

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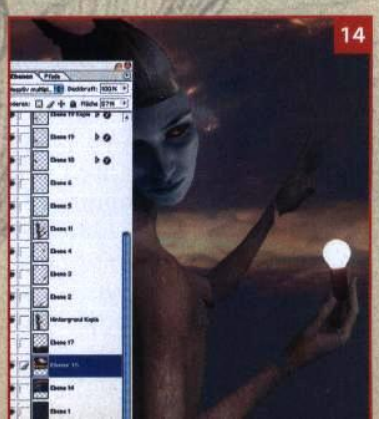
14

Fig.16
shows a little trick for those who have enough space on their monitor or those who do not want to name every single layer but in spite of that like to know which layer they are on at any time; with one click of the tiny arrow (see circle in Fig. 16) a context menu for the layer inspector pops up which contains various features, e.g. the layer palette. There, you may adjust a miniature view of the single layers to your own requirements.

Fig. 17
With my camera at hand, I start searching for suitable doors - and I find them!

Once more, I select the files that I have just copied to my hard disk with the polygon lasso and drag them into my artwork with the drag & drop arrow.

Hint:
I recommend creating a suitable file system for reference photographs to ease their administration. Of course, these files ought to have category names; anything else does not make sense. When you have enough data you may save them by burning them on DVD.

Fig. 18
The artwork like it is now visible on the screen. For a computer illustration, this would sure be enough. However, I would like to create a unique original (which may not be reproduced at will by one hit on a button), one that may be touched and that will last longer than the constantly changing data systems of computer industry. And so the real work starts right now...

The next step is split into two alternatives: when you need a good print for the next steps, you have the file printed in 30 x 40 cm on 90-120 gr mat paper on an Epson Stylus (e.g. in a copy shop). As an alternative, you may also print the single parts of the collage on your home printer (every standard ink jet printer with at least 300 dpi).

Fig. 19
I have opted for the Epson Stylus. The prints are better saturated and the pigmented ink is more durable than the usual ink jet brands. Now we have to pre-Fix and apply a thin layer of varnish. For the fixative, I have use simple finish that you may use for fixing acrylics, coal and graphite artwork. When it is dry, I apply some standard clear coat from a DIY store.

As you can see in Fig. 19, the prints have some semi matte gleam (you get that result after about 3 layers of varnish). If you decide to use your home printer, please do use mat 90 gr paper - photo paper is not suitable for this kind of further processing.

Fig. 20
When the preparation of the prints is done, I start the further steps.

For the large format version you cut one part out of one piece and the next part from another etc. (similar to Fig. 20) The single parts must fit approximately - take care!

For the next step I need some fibre glue (paste would also do, but has a weaker hold). Now it becomes clear why I did varnish the pictures before - if you do not prepare them like that, the ink may be dissolved which causes smearing.

Fig. 21
With much patience and using a radiant heater I manage to

apply the snippets to the canvas before they have a chance to go wavy. Canvas, in contrast to cardboard or wood, offers the advantage that the humidity may soak into the material at once.

With hard and non-absorbent supports, I recommend the use of spray glue or Fixogum, which may be rubbed away from the surface of the picture.

Fig. 22
Approximately in the middle of the picture, or after about three hours and a half, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. A nice patchwork texture appears and the motive starts appearing.

Using this kind of collage, you get a very special effect with almost every motive. It is also interesting when used only for parts, e.g. for a certain area within the work of art.

Fig. 23
This looks quite good already, paper and glue cause a significant raise of the surface tension and the canvas is tautened considerably. Alas, this causes undesired "seams" where the pieces of paper butt instead of overleaping. These parts must be reworked afterwards with a fine brush and some paint mixed accordingly.

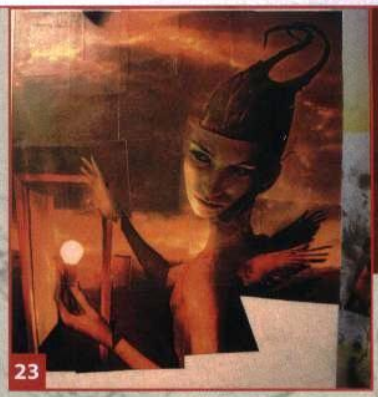

Fig. 24
Unfortunately, the colors on this photograph are somewhat distorted (because of the artificial light), but apart from that it looks quite acceptable. The details are still missing; yet, the most difficult part is over.

I take my time for working out selected parts - time to establish my personal contact with the artwork once more.

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I lay some brushstrokes over the background with thinned tube watercolor and a bristle brush. With a 001 red sable I work between the pieces of the collage, the gaps and edges of the scraps to correct everything that still looks white in Fig. 24 with the respective hue.

Fig. 25
I mix most hues with yellow as a basic color, adding some van Dyck brown and manage the rest by adding more or less water.

Now the reasons for my color selection become obvious: the less colors on the print, the easier you can mix them afterwards. I rework several parts with my Evolution airbrush - lighten up the light bulb and use white to spatter over a few areas.

Fig. 26
The gradients on the arm as well as the transition towards the wings is airbrush work.

Tricking the viewers by using various techniques has always appealed to me!

After I am done with brushes and airbrush I clamped some threads over the artwork with some yarn and glue by simply attaching them to the back of the stretcher.

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26

After that, I painted the frame with black acrylic paint from the outside to better adapt it to the shadow gap frame afterwards.

When the work is dry and after applying another layer of varnish I could prepare everything for the scan.

Fig. 27
Scanning a 30 x 40 format has become quite simple for me in the meantime. Even a Schoellershammer size 50 x 70 does not take

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more than half an hour, including the assembly in Photoshop. And it is worthwhile, because reproductions are quite expensive and their quality is not necessarily better. As you can see in Fig. 27, I first scan the lower part of the artwork.

Hint:
Those who do not believe in the quality of this technique ought to think about the following facts: A 50 x 70 board is scanned in 8 parts at 600 dpi with an A4 scanner. However, it is only displayed at 300 dpi...in other words, we even get 100 x 140 cm at 300 dpi.

As I may scan up to 1200 dpi with a normal scanner, I might even quadruple the display size - you could see every single hair of the plain cardboard texture, then. The actual quality only depends on the scanner itself.

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Fig. 28
As you can see in Fig. 28, I now scan the other part of the artwork (mind the 2-3 cm overlap that you need in the middle of the picture).

Now that I have the two parts of the artwork in my computer, I simply have to combine them. Just get to the computer and unpack the graphics tablet - it is as simple as that!

Fig. 29
As you can see in Fig. 29, there is enough left of the right arm in the lower part of the picture, i.e. enough space to overlap. As the colors of the scans seem to be all right, I

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create a new file first (in the actual display size 30 x 40 cm, 300 dpi).

Both scans may be positioned correctly using the command "image -> turn workplace -> turn 90° to the right" and all you have to do then is drag & drop them into the new file.

Fig. 30
Now we start merging. I call this step "merging" even in German, because there is no better word to describe the amalgamation of single parts into one work of art.

At first, I set one of the layers to 50% opacity (layer 2). With the layer inspector (Fig. 30, red mark below) the opacity may be adjusted continuously or by keyboard entry.

Now you drag the picture on top of the other one with the arrow tool

- mind the perfect fit! The zoom feature may be very helpful here.

Fig. 31
Now you may set the opacity to 100 % again.

Hint:
If, at to the drag & drop arrow, a small hook appears next to the feature "select layer automatically" (see red box Fig. 31), you may select the layers simply by clicking on the layer which you are seeing on the screen.

When dragging scanned parts of a picture, this feature is a real blessing.

Fig. 32
This picture shows a good view of the joint, which appears somewhat darker because of the scanner support.

It does not matter because I always allow for 3 - 5 cm to be etched in order to remove exactly this kind of border.

With a soft eraser (60 % opacity and size 100 pixels, soft edge) it is rather easy to erase the dark border using the graphics tablet and etching pen.

Fig. 33
After successfully completing the procedure, both layers have been reduced to one.

And then the actual work begins. Armed with the clone stamp I start removing impurities caused by dirt on the scanner, dust etc. As you can see here, I select the clone stamp tool and select 50 % opacity/size 20 pixels in the settings. With the levels I light up the picture and correct the colors a little.

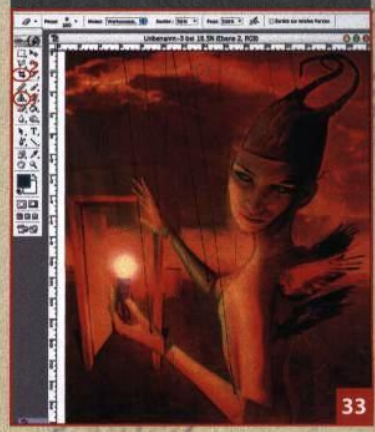
Finally, I may remove the white border on the left and the dark edge on the right with the crop tool (see Fig. 33, too).

Fig. 34
Now that the artwork is digitalized, one might play around with it a little and try out things. But that is entirely up to you. After saving the file as a .psd and - for security reasons - as a .tiff, nothing can go wrong any more. I burn it on CD-ROM for archiving purposes and I still have an original to sell, as a reference, for printing or just for my own wall.

I hope this workshop has been interesting for Photoshop beginners as well as experienced users.

Let us wait and see what comes next, maybe a sculpture that finds its way into the computer and back? Who knows?

www.fantasio.info



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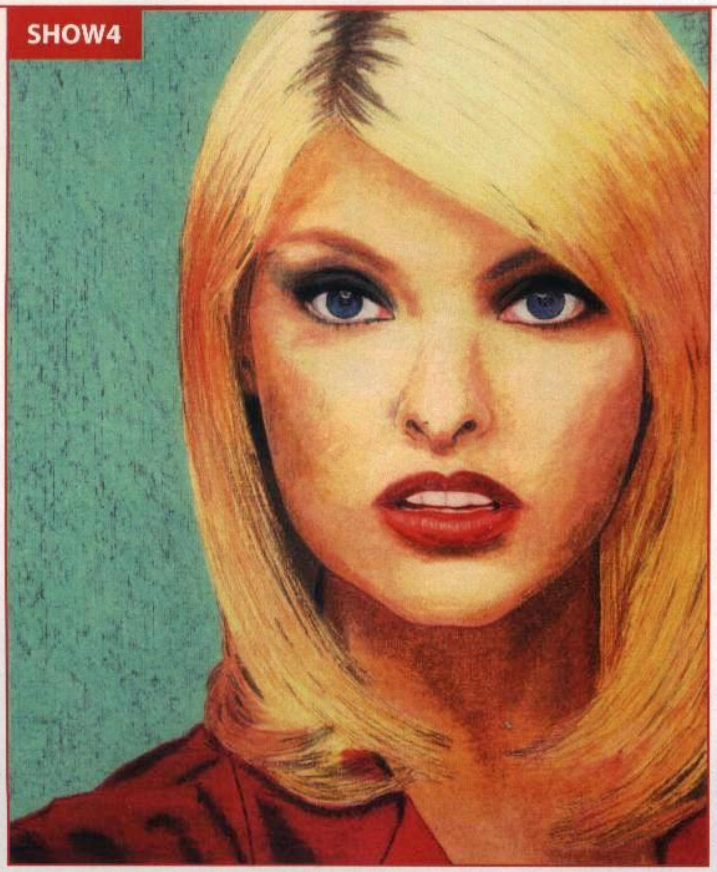
SHOW4



Title: Linda • color pencils (Prismacolor by Berol) • Support: paper

Rebecca Headridge (AUS) • Title: Santana • sandk1@optusnet.com.au

SHOW5

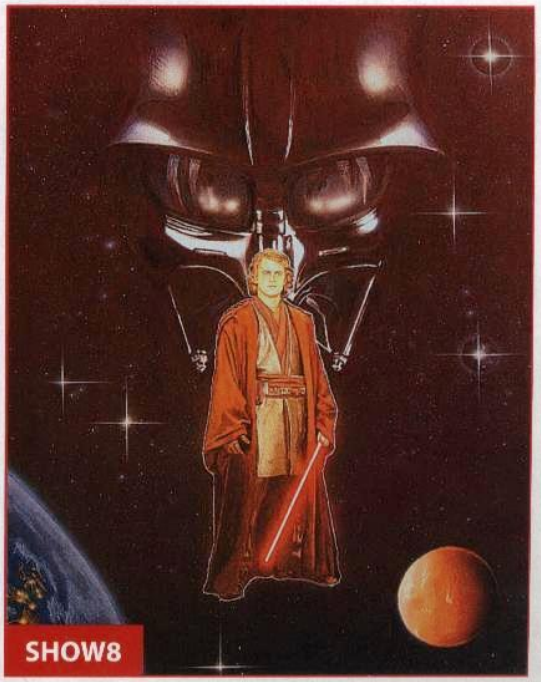
Paul (USA)
no further details
www.butvilaillustrations.com

Gaby Hylla (D)
Title: "Drachenland"
(dragon land)
Digital: 3D Bryce
www.gabyhylla3d.de/

SHOW7

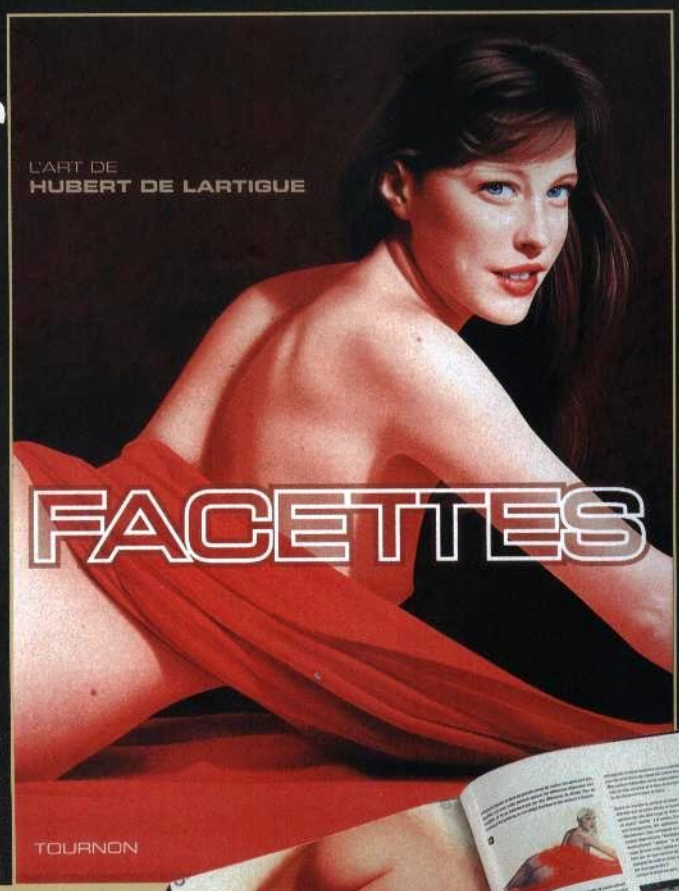
SHOW6

Thomas Leopold (D) • Title: Anakin • Paint: Aerocolor, Gouache (Schmincke), Polychromos pencils (Faber-Castell) • Support: Schoellershammer 35x50 cm



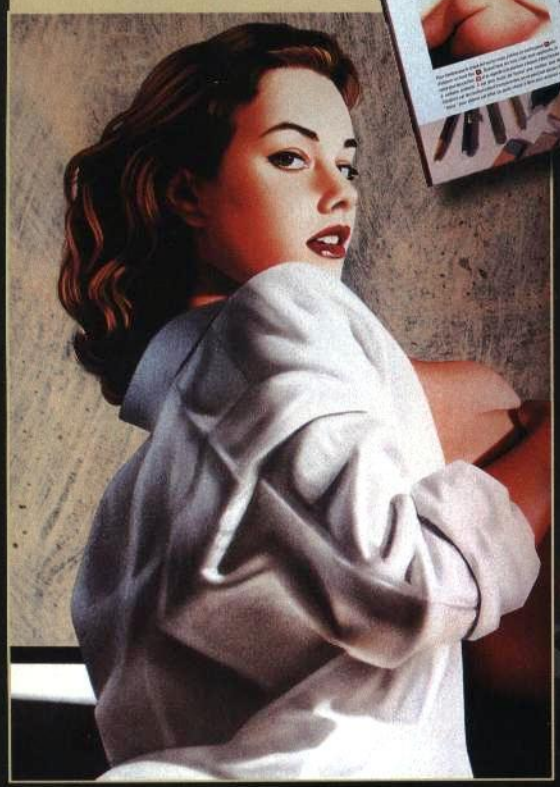
SHOW8

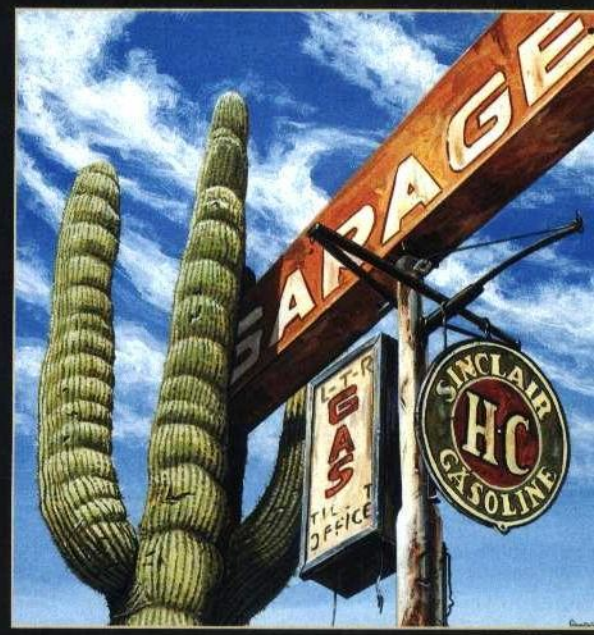
L'Art de Hubert De Lartigue



Since the 1990s, French illustrator Hubert De Lartigue has been concentrating on pin up art and celebrates great achievements with his work all over the world. In the meantime, he ranks among the best artists in this field and so the French artist follows the footsteps of renowned artists like Brénot, Vargas, Petty and Elvgren.

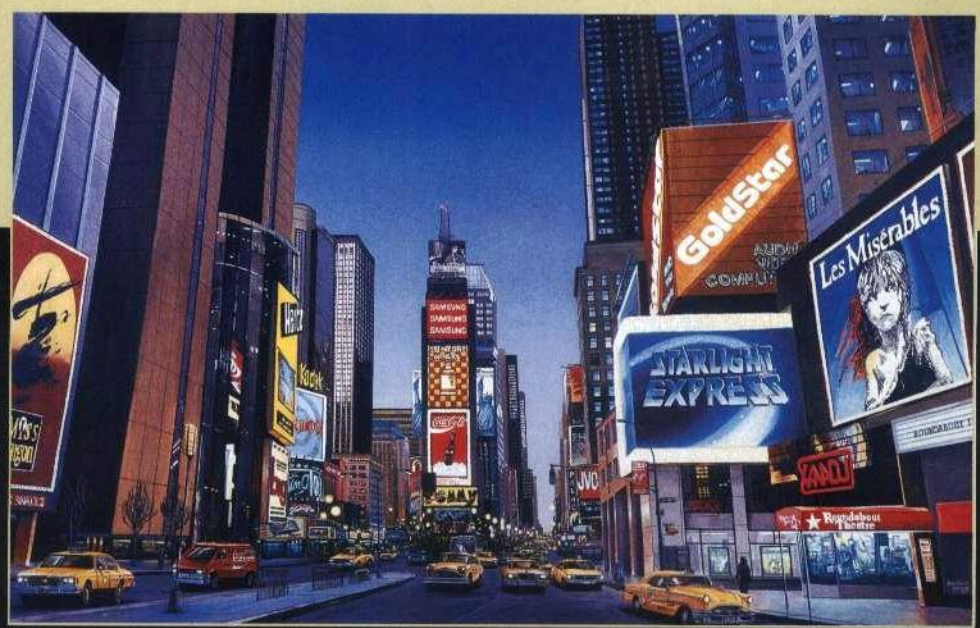
With "French Pin-Ups", De Lartigue already published a collection of his best artwork some time ago, which is now complemented with "Facettes". In this book, many new and previously unpublished pin up artwork awaits the viewer, often





"With this book, I would like to stimulate people's dreams and imaginations", Georg Huber explains, "and show an aspect of America that maybe will not exist much longer and of which only memories or pictures will remain."

"Lost and Lovely" shows paintings on canvas as well as airbrush work on illustration board from the years 1992 and 2004. It offers many little escapes for the eyes and mind, with which the viewer may get out of our often fast-paced and restless world. Moreover, this illustrated book sparks a certain longing for freedom and vastness and, at least in most people, a large dose of the travel bug. All those who have traveled the USA on their own already will certainly recognize many scenes and remember their own experiences with a sigh. A personal account of his journey by Georg Huber completes the book.



This illustrated book is of interest for art lovers, but also those who are in love with America.

Lost and Lovely
The Roadside Art of
Georg Huber
Text in German and English
Hardcover, bound,
with book jacket
96 pages, colored end to end
ISBN - 3-00-016989
Euro 25,90

A Melody of Ne

by Frank Fiedler

Now that you know Frank Fiedler and his great artwork from the interview "Forgotten Realms", you certainly are as interested as we are to find out how he creates his art.

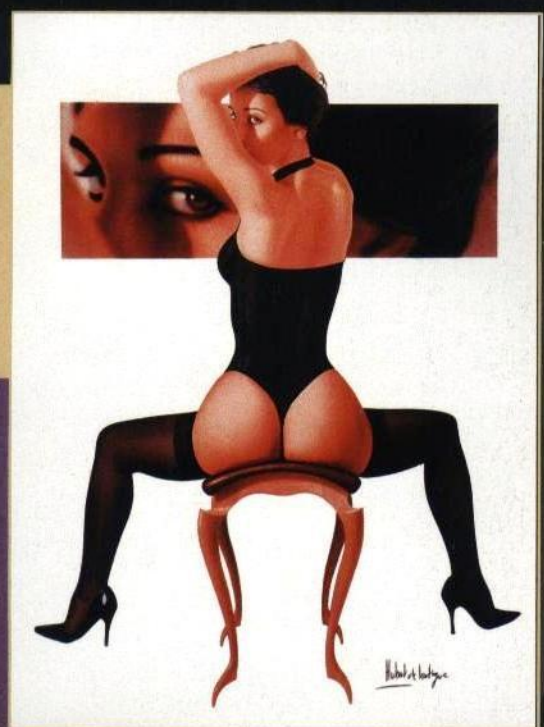
Like many illustrators and artists, Fiedler also uses the new digital medium for his work. On the basis of ideas and preliminary sketches he looks for his reference materials in books, the Internet or in photographs he has taken himself and creates his impressive artwork with them in some kind of digital collage. The following workshop "A Melody of Love"

supplemented by details, which can only be identified as hand painted artwork at a second glance. Hubert has skillfully staged every one of the most beautiful models so no background draws off the attention from the actual main motive. Moreover, following the style of the great masters, the few objects that are to be seen in the artwork are just a telephone, a bar stool or a chair. No additional objects are required, because the poses, the facial expression and the natural beauty are the ingredients that make the viewer browse through this work over and over again in fascination.

In the annex, there is a highlight for all those who would like to learn about the art of pin up painting themselves: A 14 pages step by step workshop which describes in 46 images the detailed creation of one of the works of art. The only problem: the text in "Facettes" is in French. However, those with a little knowledge about airbrush and brush will be able to understand the working procedure of the French artist rather quickly thanks to the wealth of pictures.

Our conclusion: Hubert De Lartigue once more underlines the fact that he is one of the best contemporary pin up artists, and that we may expect much more from him, in an impressive manner.

Facettes
L'Art de Hubert De Lartigue
96 pages
Publisher: Mascare/ Tournon
ISBN 2-35144-002 1



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proves that this is not just "cut and paste", that apart from creativity, understanding of light and shadows, perspective, color theory and conception are indispensable prerequisites for a well done work, also in digital art. Moreover, this report gives a good insight into the work with Adobe Photoshop.

Configuration:
Computer: PC
Operating system: Windows XP
Processor: 2.6 GHz
RAM: 1 GB
Software: Photoshop 7
Camera: Canon 300 D
Digitizer: Scanner, Wacom Intuos graphic tablet

Fig. 1
The first screenshot presents the working space of Photoshop 7 as well as my starting reference. I found the picture with model Elandria at DeviantArt. It shows the perfect pose, color and quality for my work.

Cropping the person will not be a problem here, as the hair falls down straight, too. I will use the polygon lasso because I may then pause in between and I do not have to encircle everything in one go. Hair that stands out in thin strands is best painted anew later on. Experience shows that cropping these will not supply any satisfactory results. According to the requirements, you may even do without strands (not too generously, of course).

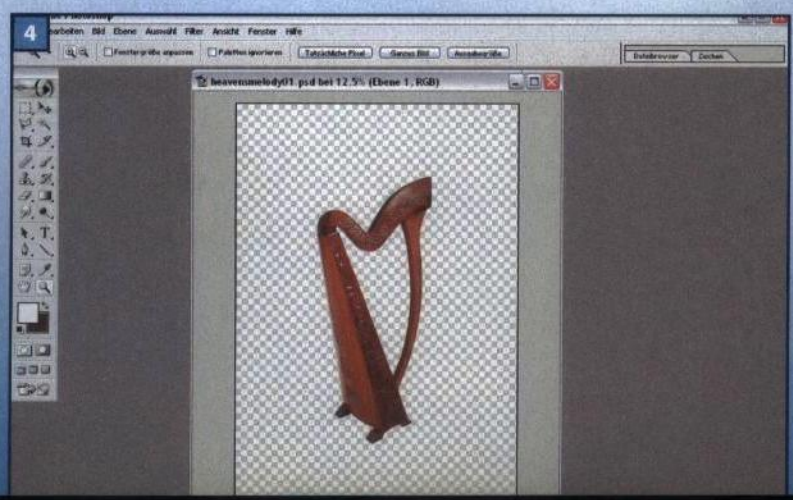
Back to the cropping process: Photoshop offers a wide range of possibilities. The magic wand for example can be of great value. However, it is only convenient when the contours are clear cut and neatly separated. It is too imprecise in other cases.

Another possibility is the Quick Mask Mode. Here you may apply paint with a brush or other tools, which will then switch to a selection when shifting. I have formed a habit of duplicating the selection as a new layer instead of cutting and invert the selection. Inverting the selection may cause distortions in the selections.

Fig. 2 and 3
These pictures show two of my backgrounds that have emerged over time. Whenever I work on pictures, I save intermediate stages, particularly in the case of textures and backgrounds. In many cases, these backgrounds have their own almost independent and idiosyncratic development, e.g. by merging and experimenting when laying some textures over one another.

You should make it a habit to create a kind of library of all kinds of objects, textures, background pictures, poses etc. It pays off in the end! And to prevent the hard disk from filling up too fast, you ought to save the library, sorted according to subjects, on CD or even better on DVD and remove it from the disk.

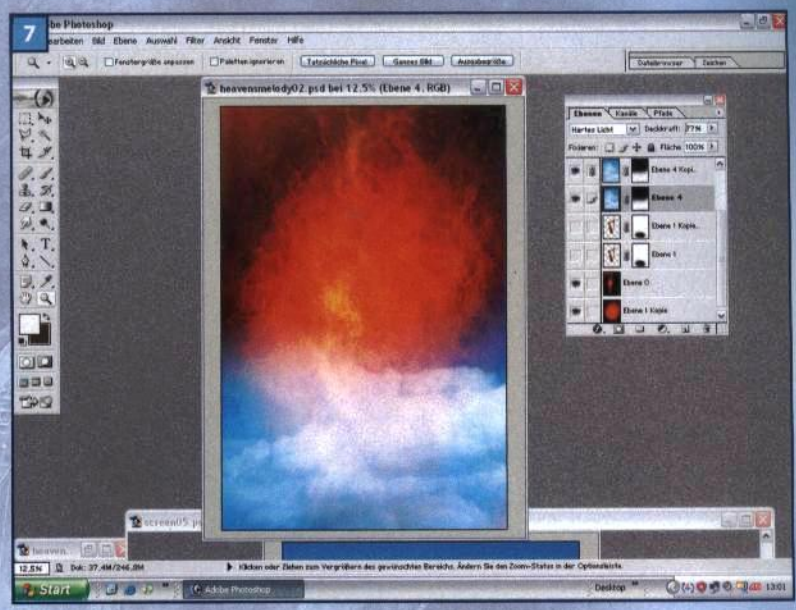
Fig. 4
A harp - already knocked out. I simply took away the strings



because they are easier to draw than to crop and I may depict them much finer. Please do not try to capture every single string with the path tool or the polygon lasso. This is much too tedious and time-consuming work and it is not worth it.

Fig. 5
Oops, we are getting mystical now. This background has emerged over the years, too - and it appears in my artwork every now and then in all kinds of variations. It has also been incorporated in a fractal picture, which I then "de-saturated" and added anew as a negative. This procedure adds the atmospheric touch to the picture. Very often, coincidences and experiments produce the best results!

Fig. 6
I have taken this cloud photograph in my hometown. The clouds were so huge that day that I could not help but take a picture. You ought to always have one of these modern small digital cameras with you. These clouds are beautifully apt for "Melody", as our angel needs something to sit on!



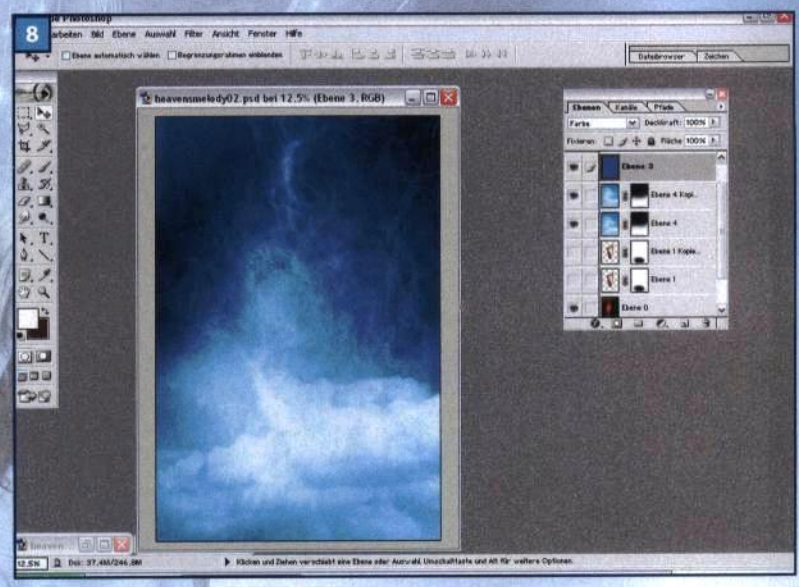


Fig. 7
After I have collected all the references I need, I may start working. I use the background picture #2 as lower layer and place picture #3 on top of it. Then I set the layer mode to "screen". In this case I leave the layer opacity at 100 percent, as the lower layer is very dominant. Now I place the cloud photograph in a layer on top of it all and crop the required cloud elements with the

heavenly sphere. At the same time, the dark elements on the border of the picture add some more nuances.

Fig. 10
Now I place the knocked out harp in the clouds (just drag & drop into the picture) and set the mode of this layer to "screen". In spite of this, it just drowns in the turbulence of the picture with its opacity; I simply duplicate the layer and set the layer mode of the lower harp layer to normal. Moreover, I adjust the opacity so there is a good balance

layer mask and a soft large tool tip - and hide those I do not need with the layer mask.

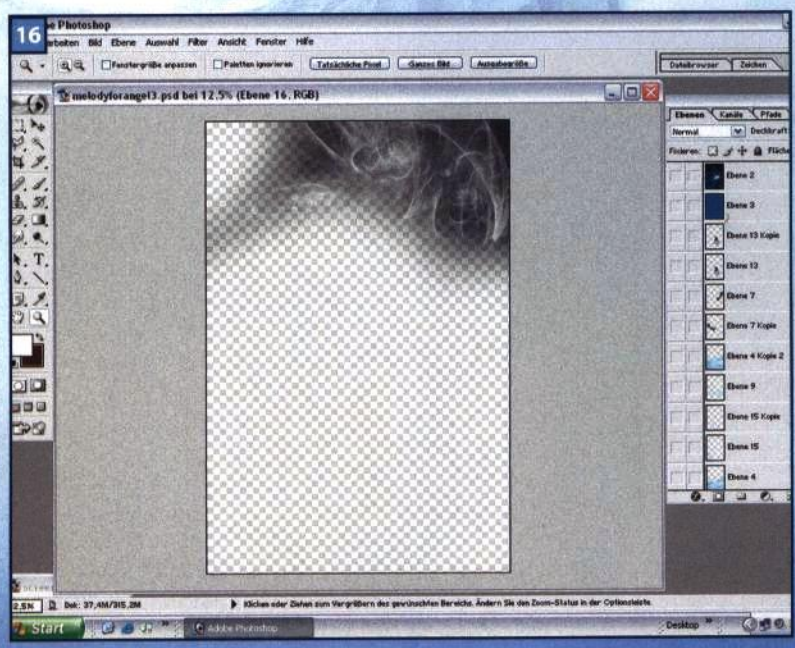
Fig. 8
Hey, what happened here? Very simple - I have created a new top layer and filled it with blue. You get an even hue by setting the layer mode to "color" then. Work can be so easy...

Fig. 9
Heavenly times coming up now! How? I take the background picture (see Fig. 5) as top layer and set the layer mode to "soft light" - and there we are! Thanks to the stars that are already in the picture the whole thing appears like some

between transparency and opacity. You have to play a little here. But that is what we like to do!

Fig. 11
Our cropped model is also added now. Similar to the harp I set one layer to "screen" mode, duplicate it, set the lower layer to normal and reduce opacity. You will see the result in the next picture.

Fig. 12
The harp that appears inside the person now is suppressed quickly with the layer mask. For that purpose, I insert the selection of the person after creating the layer mask and



suppress the harp elements within the person with black.

Fig. 13
What is an angel without its wings? Then again, they seldom originate from a wild goose like in this case...

Fig. 14
Luckily, Photoshop offers great possibilities. We set the layer with the wings to "screen". Then the harp appears inside the wings. But that is not a problem either: We put the treasure one layer down where the pieces of the harp simply disappear with some light gray painted on them thanks to the layer mode. This can certainly also be obtained with the layer mask - many roads lead to Rome.

Fig. 15
Drawing the harp strings ought to be a piece of cake with the line drawer. A little trick strongly reduces working time: Only paint the first string, then duplicate the others and slightly drag them to the side. Now cut the overlapping pieces by merging all layers with strings into one and then take a selection with the magic wand within the harp. Invert the selection and then cut with "Strg" and

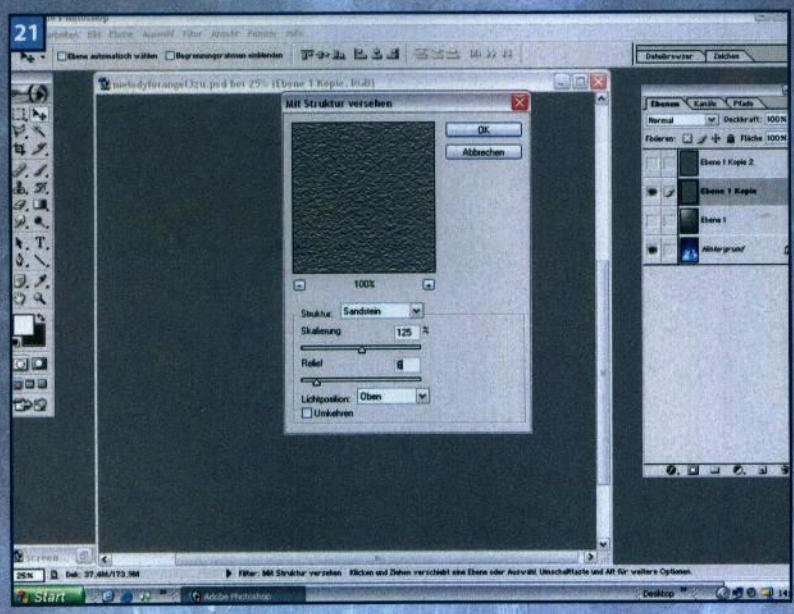


Fig. 21
I love textures. Back in the layer palette I create a new layer that I fill with 50 percent gray. Then I apply the texture filter "sandstone" to this gray.

Fig. 22
This layer created with sandstone is then duplicated twice in this case. In the first gray layer I apply the filter "rendering filter - lightning effects".

Then I set the relief channel to the channel I had created first (and to which I had applied the "glowing edges"). Sounds complicated, but it is not.

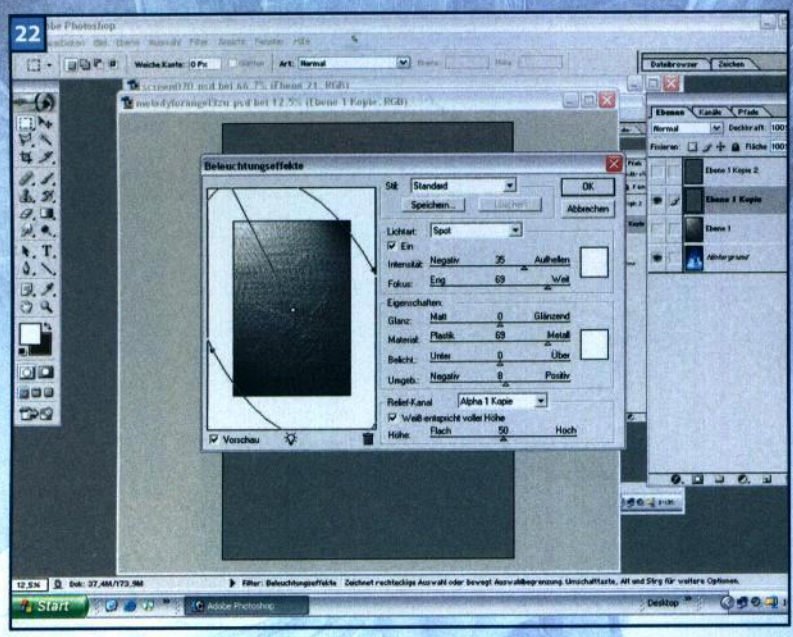


Fig. 23
Here you see the result. No panic, it does not stay that way. Therefore I set this layer to "soft light" in the layer mode.

Fig. 24
This is how the texture looks in our picture now. Some corrections of the light with the dodge and the picture I simply call "Melody" is finished! I hope you will have as much fun trying your own artwork!

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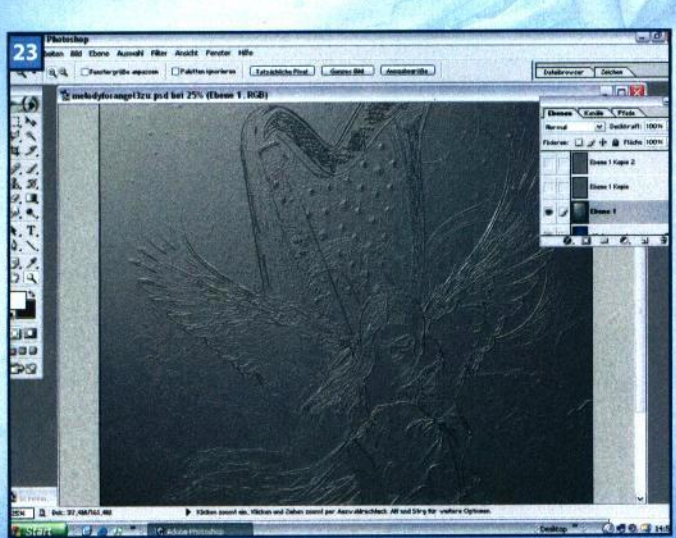

"X". By the way... I added some small stars that I painted to the strings.

Fig. 16
As the whole artwork still has not enough atmosphere for my taste, I quickly add one layer with a fractal picture. However, it is only a small part of a scanned fractal. The layer is desaturated and the layer mode set to "screen" - you know that by now.

Fig. 17
From now on, I work with the single channels. For that purpose, the layers of the whole picture are reduced to the background layer and then everything is selected. Then I copy the whole thing into the clipboard with "Strg" and "c". Now I go to channels and create an additional new channel into which I insert the clipboard. When required, I resharpen it with "unsharp mask".

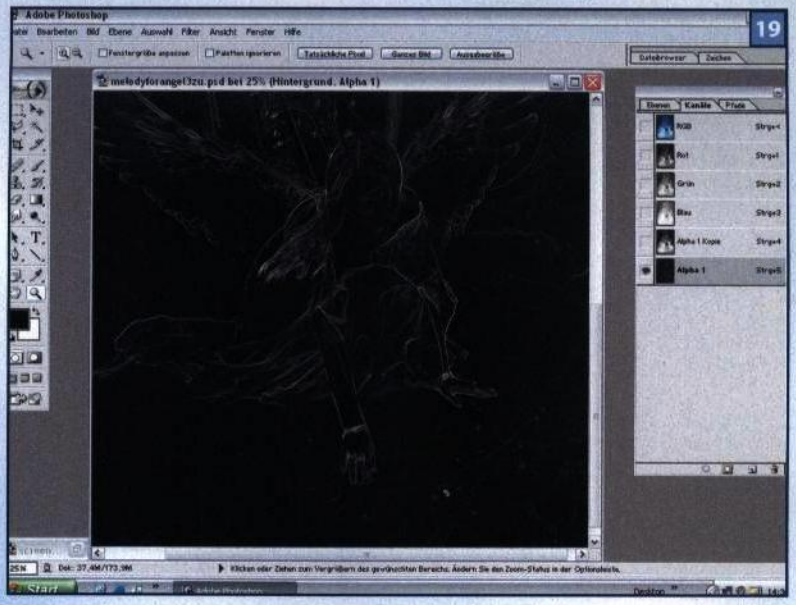

Fig. 18.
Here I use the stylize filter "glowing edges" for this channel.

While I do that, I reduce the value "outline width" to 1 and adjust the remaining values so there is enough drawing in the picture without looking too thick. After applying the filter you may additionally obtain more drawing with the contrast settings, if required.

Fig. 19
The result of the filter I have just applied.

Fig. 20
As I said before - many roads lead to Rome. You may also obtain this effect with other filters. If in doubt, try them out - that is the motto. One possibility is to use the filter "brush strokes - ink outlines". Or to use a combination of both filters on different channels. Just try it!